

New releases: it's music to your ears

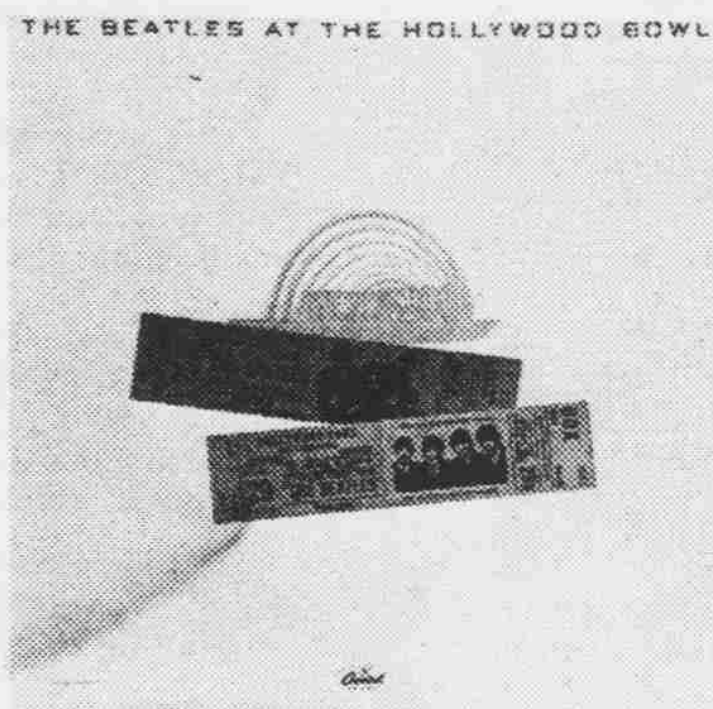
By DOUG GRAVES
DTH Contributor

Little Queen, Heart (Portrait)



Heart is the first successful band in a long time to feature female vocals in a hard rock context. While their sound is occasionally mellow, the focus is on straight-out driving music and Ann Wilson's powerful voice. "Barracuda," their new single and this album's opening track, exemplifies this with a churning riff not unlike that of "Achilles' Last Stand" by Led Zeppelin. "Kick It Out" and the title cut are also examples of the rocking side of the group, while "Love Alive" and "Cry To Me" are my favorites of their softer songs. Those who liked *Dreamboat Annie*, Heart's exceptional debut album, should also enjoy this.

The Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl (Capitol)



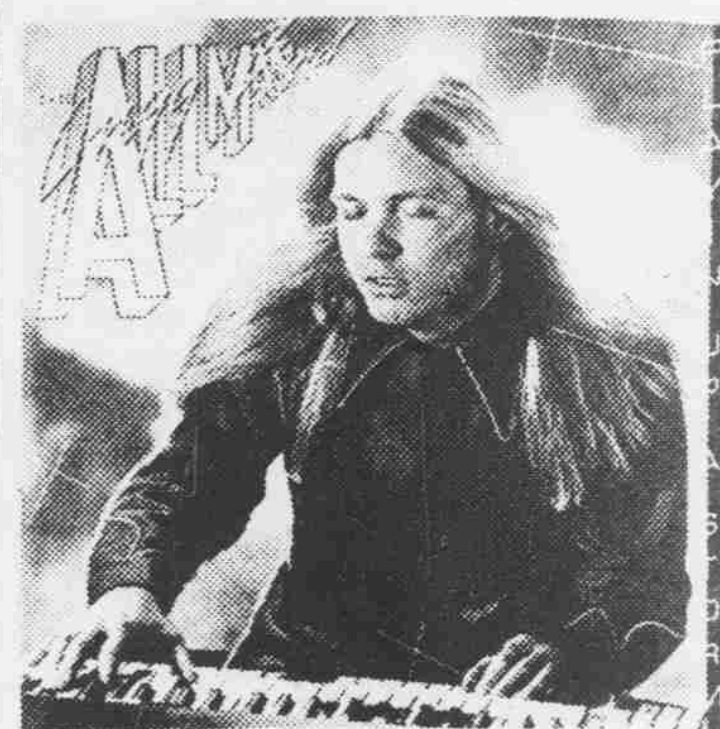
Since I've been a Beatles fan since the beginning, I suppose it's not surprising that I like this album very much. It is admittedly not a great production, but for me the mediocre recording quality is outweighed by the sheer enthusiasm of the band and crowd. Since the tapes were made in 1964 and '65, all of the material is from their early albums, but this gives the listener an idea of the Beatles as a live rock 'n' roll band as compared to the studio band they were to become starting with *Rubber Soul*. Some will undoubtedly be put off by the screaming throughout, which does sound pretty silly, but it is the way people reacted to them—they didn't call it Beatlemania for nothing. It was a musical and cultural phenomenon the likes of which may never be seen again.

This Time It's for Real, Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes (Epic)



Beach music lives! It may be nostalgia to some, but to Southside Johnny I, yon, it's the music of his soul and he sings it with every bit of feeling he has. Vocally, he is not unlike his old Asbury Park friend Bruce Springsteen, except that he's maybe a little smoother. Backed by a tight band and horn section, he can't go wrong with a great selection of songs—two oldies, five by Miami Steve Van Zandt (Springsteen's guitarist and the Jukes' producer), and three Springsteen-Van Zandt collaborations. Add to that appearances by the Drifters, the Coasters, and the Five Satins on one song each, and you can understand how Johnny makes 1950's-style rhythm and blues come alive.

Playin' Up a Storm, The Gregg Allman Band (Capricorn)



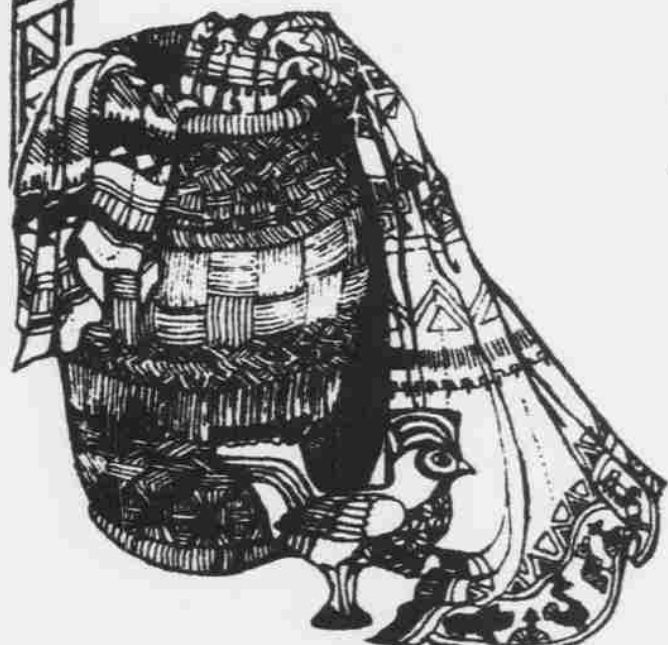
The fault in this album is not in Gregg, but in the band he has chosen to play with him. Gregg is a blues singer, blessed with an expressive and versatile voice, but to sing the blues, you've got to have someone playing the blues. This group sounds unemotional and studio-perfect; they know the notes, but they don't get the feeling. (It's interesting that the band listed on the back cover does not correspond exactly to the people pictured on the inside cover, so perhaps Gregg has realized this problem.) I'm disappointed in this LP, but I hope that its best track, "Brightest Smile in Town" (which is a tribute to Ray Charles), indicates the direction in which Gregg will go.

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